



Angélica Infante-Green  
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

**Enclosure 5c1**  
**May 12, 2021**

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**TO:** Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

**FROM:** Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner *A. Infante*

**RE:** **Excel Academy Rhode Island Proposal for a New Charter – Request for Approval**

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I present for your consideration the recommendation to grant Excel Academy Rhode Island final authorization to operate. This recommendation verifies that, since the granting of preliminary approval on December 15, 2020, Excel Academy Rhode Island has met all of the technical operational requirements required to successfully open their charter for the 2022-23 school year.

Authorization to Operate:

Excel Academy Rhode Island will open a mayoral academy charter serving students from Central Falls, North Providence, and Providence. The school will be located in Providence. The school will serve 2,186 students (at-scale), with 166 students in the first year of operation.

In accordance with R.I.G.L. §16-77.3-3, the authorization to operate a new charter requires final approval by the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education. Excel Academy Rhode Island obtained preliminary approval at the December 15, 2020, meeting of the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Regulations Governing Rhode Island Public Charter Schools 200-RICR-20-05-2 outline the criteria that must be met in order to obtain final approval from the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education. These criteria align primarily to meeting operational requirements necessary to successfully open a charter school.

RIDE has conducted a review of the criteria submitted by the proposed charter, including the submissions addressing the essential concerns from the application review. RIDE has concluded that the Excel Academy Rhode Island has satisfactorily addressed all required pre-opening items and essential concerns.

**RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education move to issue a final charter to Excel Academy Rhode Island and authorize its operation for a maximum term of five years beginning in the 2022-2023 school year and ending in the 2027-2028 school year.**

Enclosed Documents:

The following documents provide further detail regarding the Commissioner's recommendation and analysis contributing to that recommendation:

- Commissioner's Recommendation Overview for Final approval (including a detailed overview of Excel Academy Rhode Island's proposal and an overview of Regulatory Requirements for Final Approval).
- RIDE's local impact analysis and publically submitted local impact analyses (educational, programmatic, and fiscal) from the December 15, 2020, Council meeting regarding preliminary approval.



**Excel Academy Rhode Island**  
**Commissioner's Recommendation & Proposal Overview**  
**Commissioner's Recommendation: Final Approval**

## Summary of Proposal

Proposed Charter Overview			
Charter Type:	Mayoral	Year Opening:	2022-23
Location of School:	TBD	Grade Level (At-Scale):	K-12
Enrolling Communities:	Providence, Central Falls, North Providence	Enrollment (At-Scale):	2,186
		Enrollment (First Year):	166

School Mission & Model	
School Mission:	"The mission of Excel is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities."
School Model:	Excel Academy Rhode Island proposes to open a K-12 school in 2022-23 through a partnership with Excel Academy Charter Schools, an experienced charter school operator based in Massachusetts. The school will focus on closing the opportunity gap for low-income students of color through four key drivers: rigor, systems, support, and joy.

Proposed Enrollment			
Charter Year	School Year	Cohorts	Total Student Enrollment
Year 1	2022-23	K, 1, 5	166
Year 2	2023-24	K, 1, 2, 5, 6	444
Year 3	2024-25	K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7	892
Year 4	2025-26	K-8	1228
Year 5	2026-27	K-9	1510
Year 9 (At-Scale)	2030-31	K-12	2186



# Excel Academy Rhode Island

## Commissioner's Recommendation & Proposal Overview

### Commissioner's Recommendation: Final Approval

#### Overview of Commissioner's Recommendation

Summary of Recommendation	
Recommended Action:	<b>The Commissioner recommends that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to issue a final charter to Excel Academy Rhode Island and authorizes its operation for a maximum term of five (5) years beginning in the 2022-2023 school year and ending in the 2027-2028 school year.</b>
Key Recommendation Drivers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As verified by SchoolWorks, an independent, nationally recognized reviewer, the Excel applicant group has provided a proposal for a rigorous, inclusive model that has strong potential to meet the needs of students in the Providence area.</li> <li>The applicant group (which includes the Mayors of the three sending districts) provides compelling evidence demonstrating a specific need for the school, as well as a strong rationale for their ability to operate the school. Excel will partner with Excel Academy Charter Schools, an experienced operator which has experience serving similar student populations and has successfully increased student achievement rates and outcomes at their existing schools in Massachusetts.</li> <li>The applicant group presents a strategic growth plan based on the belief that steady growth is critical for establishing a strong student community and culture of achievement. As mentioned above, the school will open in 2022-23 with grades K, 1, and 5, and continue adding grades until it reaches full scale – K-12 – in 2030-31.</li> <li>The application was rated “yes” on 63.4% of the application standards, and “mostly” for 36.4% of the application standards evaluated by SchoolWorks in the quality evaluation.</li> <li>Family Demand: For the 2020-21 school year, there were more than 13,000 applications received from students in grades K – 12 residing in Central Falls, North Providence, and Providence. Only 1,234 seats were offered to these applicants.</li> <li>Out of all the students in the enrolling communities in grades K-12 who applied to a charter school in 2020, between 8% and 17% were offered a charter school seat.</li> <li>At-scale, Excel's enrollment represents 4.8% of Central Falls' student enrollment, 5.4% of North Providence's student enrollment, and 5.9% of Providence's student enrollment in 2020-21.</li> <li>According to March 2020 charter lottery data, 57% of over 10,000 unique applications for charter school seats were applications from Central Falls, North Providence, and Providence families.</li> <li>The Commissioner recommends that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education grant preliminary approval to the Excel proposal.</li> <li>Prior to final approval, the Excel applicant team must complete required conditions and all pre-opening deliverables. RIDE anticipates the Excel applicant team to complete all required conditions to open in 2022-23.</li> <li>Preliminary approval enables the applicant team to begin implementation of the proposal while allowing RIDE to both support and hold the applicant team accountable for final approval. Below is a summary of the regulatory and operational requirements for applicant teams to gain final approval.</li> </ul>



## Excel Academy Rhode Island

### Commissioner's Recommendation & Proposal Overview

### Commissioner's Recommendation: Final Approval

#### Charter Regulatory Requirements for Final Charter Approval

*Adherence to charter regulatory requirements is mandated per statute for final approval. In addition to regulatory requirements, the following proposed conditions are intended to address essential concerns identified by the application review committee. The applicant team must meet all regulatory requirements and Council approved conditions prior to final approval.*

2.2.4(B)1.	<i>File Articles of Incorporation</i>	The applicant team submitted evidence of filing articles of incorporation for Excel Academy Rhode Island in January 2021.
2.2.4(B)3.	<i>Establish Governance Structure (i.e. board of trustees or directors)</i>	The Excel Academy Rhode Island team submitted a governance structure in March 2021.
2.2.4(B)4.	<i>Hire a qualified chief administrator</i>	Elizabeth Matson and Michaelle Larracuent were identified as Co-Heads of School in April 2021.
2.2.4(B)5.	<i>Staffing plan Consistent with School Design</i>	The Excel Academy Rhode Island team submitted a staffing plan at the time of the original application submission in September 2020. The staffing plan is consistent with the Excel Academy Rhode Island design as defined in the charter school's application.
2.2.4(B)6.	<i>Evidence of Interest in Enrollment</i>	The Excel Academy Rhode Island team collected evidence of interest in enrollment via survey, which resulted in 88 families expressing interest to enroll in the school in Fall 2022. Excel Academy Rhode Island submitted evidence of interest in enrollment to RIDE.
2.2.4(B)7.	<i>Identify an Appropriate Building for Use</i>	The Excel Academy Rhode Island team identified the building located at 21 Peace Street as the school building. The formal facility lease was submitted in March 2021.
2.2.4(B)8.	<i>Develop a final charter.</i>	RIDE is in the process of drafting the final charter for Excel Academy Rhode Island and finalize upon receipt of final approval.



**Excel Academy Rhode Island**  
**Commissioner's Recommendation & Proposal Overview**  
**Commissioner's Recommendation: Final Approval**

<b>Summary of Recommendations for Conditions</b>	<b>Summary of RIDE's Concerns with Evaluation</b>	<b>RIDE Required Condition for Approval</b>
Condition A:	The applicant group does not have a facility identified or secured. In accordance with charter school regulations 200-RICR-20-05-2, section 2.2.4(B)7, the school must have an appropriate building (permanent or temporary) for operating the school. RIDE requires that the school have a facility secured by April 15, 2022.	Excel Academy Rhode Island has satisfied this condition.



# Excel Academy Rhode Island

## Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

### Local Community: Central Falls, North Providence, Providence

#### Proposal Overview

Proposed Charter Overview			
Charter Type:	Mayoral	Year Opening:	2022-23
Location of School:	TBD within enrolling communities	Grade Levels (At-Scale):	K-12
Enrolling Communities:	Central Falls, North Providence, Providence	Enrollment (At-Scale):	2,186

Summary of Proposal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EARI will partner with Excel Academy Charter Schools, a charter school operator based in Massachusetts that was founded to close the opportunity gap for low-income students of color</li> <li>The Excel Academy model has a track record of success in raising student achievement, particularly for differently-abled and multilingual learners</li> <li>The applicant group includes the mayors of the City of Providence, the City of Central Falls, the town of North Providence, the CEO of Excel Academy, and an Excel Academy employee (who is also a Providence resident)</li> </ul>	

Proposed Enrollment			
Charter Year	School Year	Grades	Total Student Enrollment
Year 1	2022-23	K-1, 5	166
Year 2	2023-24	K-2, 5-6	444
Year 3	2024-25	K-3, 5-7	892
Year 4	2025-26	K-8	1,228
Year 5	2026-27	K-9	1,510
Year 6	2027-28	K-10	1,738
Year 7	2028-29	K-11	1,910
Year 8	2029-30	K-12	2,079
Year 9 (at scale)	2030-31	K-12	2,186

#### Enrollment Assumptions & Comparison<sup>i</sup>

Demographics of Enrolling Communities				
Demographics (%)	Central Falls	North Providence	Providence	State Avg.
Economically Disadvantaged	95.0	46.6	84.5	47.7
Multi-Lingual Learners	48.0	4.7	33.1	10.7
Differently-abled students	20.8	17.0	14.7	15.7
Minority students	85.7	43.7	91.8	44.8



# Excel Academy Rhode Island

## Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

### Local Community: Central Falls, North Providence, Providence

How does the charter's projected enrollment fit within the overall portfolio of enrolling districts?			
Enrollment Category	Central Falls	North Providence	Providence
Total # of students enrolled in each district	2,878	3,584	23,836
EARI's at-scale enrollment as a % of each enrolling district's enrollment	7.6%	6.1%	7.3%
Total # of students residing in each enrolling community <sup>ii</sup>	4,534	4,052	29,650
EARI's at-scale enrollment as a % of total # of students residing in each enrolling community	4.8%	5.4%	5.9%

### Educational & Programmatic Impact Analysis<sup>iii</sup>

#### 2019 RICAS Grades 3-8 Performance Comparison

RICAS Results	English Language Arts (% Meets & Exceeds)					Mathematics (% Meets & Exceeds)				
	Proposed Charter	Central Falls	North Prov.	Prov.	State	Proposed Charter	Central Falls	North Prov.	Prov.	State
Grade 3	-	25.5	45.3	26.4	47.9	-	13.9	34.4	17.0	36.1
Grade 4	-	12.0	33.3	15.2	37.2	-	12.9	24.8	14.1	32.6
Grade 5	-	13.0	36.3	19.9	39.1	-	9.1	25.1	12.9	30.1
Grade 6	-	11.6	46.6	18.0	39.1	-	**	26.8	12.2	27.9
Grade 7	-	6.5	42.7	8.6	31.5	-	**	24.2	8.0	27.6
Grade 8	-	5.6	47.4	14.9	36.3	-	**	30.3	7.0	24.5

#### 2019 RICAS Subgroup Performance Comparison

RICAS Results All Tested Grades Demographic Breakdown	English Language Arts (% Meets/Exceeds)				Mathematics (% Meets/Exceeds)			
	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled
Proposed Charter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
State	36.5	22.5	7.9	6.1	29.8	15.7	6.3	5.0
Central Falls	12.6	12.6	*	**	7.9	8.3	*	**
North Providence	42.1	34.1	17.5	6.3	27.5	20.0	8.2	**
Providence	17.2	15.2	5.5	11.4	11.9	10.4	**	**

#### 2019 SAT 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Performance Comparison with Charter, District, and State Results





**Excel Academy Rhode Island**  
**Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request**  
**Local Community: Central Falls, North Providence, Providence**

SAT Results	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Average Scale Score	% Students Meets/Exceeds	Average Scale Score	% Students Meets/Exceeds
Proposed Charter	-	-	-	-
Central Falls	390	14.1	386	6.1
N. Providence	481	49.6	472	26.1
Providence	425	25.5	414	14.8
State	483	50.5	474	31.2

SAT Results Demographic Breakdown	English Language Arts (% Meets/Exceeds)				Mathematics (% Meets/Exceeds)			
	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled	All	Econ Disadv.	Multi-Lingual	Differently-abled
Proposed Charter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central Falls	14.1	12.6	**	**	6.1	5.8	**	**
N. Providence	49.6	39.1	*	**	26.1	17.4	*	**
Providence	17.2	15.2	5.5	11.4	11.9	10.4	**	**
State	36.5	22.5	7.9	6.1	29.8	15.7	6.3	5.0

Student Demand Analysis for Grade K-12 Charter Seats <sup>iv</sup>			
	Central Falls	North Providence	Providence
Number of 2020-21 Charter Applications by community for grades K-12:	1512	330	11,776
Number of 2020-21 Charter Seats Offered by community for grades K-12:	255	31	948
What % of 2020-21 grades K-12 lottery applicants by community were offered a seat?	17%	9%	8%



# Excel Academy Rhode Island

## Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

### Local Community: Central Falls, North Providence, Providence

#### Fiscal Impact Analysis

*Educational funding dollars follow each child to the school of their choice. The following analysis projects the total amount of funding that would follow students to the school of their choice, commensurate with the size of the requested expansion.*

Enrolling Community Student Funding Projections	Projected Per-Pupil Funding		
	Central Falls	N. Providence	Providence
Local Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each resident student <sup>v</sup>	\$3,388 per-pupil	\$8,828 per-pupil	\$4,570 per-pupil
State Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each resident student <sup>vi</sup>	\$13,550 per-pupil	\$6,936 per-pupil	\$11,806 per-pupil
Federal Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each resident student <sup>vii</sup>	\$2,762 per-pupil	\$773 per-pupil	\$2,000 per-pupil
Projected FY21 total per-pupil funding for each resident Student (i.e. RIDE projects this amount of total local + state federal per-pupil funding for each Providence student in FY21)	\$19,700 per-pupil	\$16,537 per-pupil	\$18,376 per-pupil
Less: 7% withheld from the local share of per pupil funding per pupil for “fixed or unique” costs <sup>viii</sup>	\$237 per-pupil	\$954 & \$902 pp (retirement adjustment)	\$320 per-pupil
Local Share – Projected FY21 per-pupil funding for each resident student, less the 7% withheld for “fixed or unique” costs	\$3,151 per-pupil	\$6,972 per-pupil	\$4,250 per-pupil
Projected FY21 total per-pupil funding for each resident Student (excluding funds withheld for “fixed or unique costs”)	\$19,463 per-pupil	\$14,681 per-pupil	18,056 per-pupil

#### Total Pupil Funding Projections, Commensurate with Expansion Proposal: Central Falls

Fiscal Year	Proposed Charter Projected Enrollment		Projected Total Local Share Pupil Funding commensurate with new charter proposal	Projected Total Local Share Per Pupil Funding as % of local FY19 Total Expenditures <sup>ix</sup>	Projected Total Pupil Funding (Local+State+ Federal) commensurate with new charter proposal	Projected Total Withholding for Fixed or Unique Costs (to district)
	Total	Central Falls				
2022-23 (Year 1)	166	17	\$53,567	0.10%	\$330,871	\$4,029
2026-27 (5 years)	1,510	151	\$475,801	0.90%	\$2,938,913	\$35,787
2030-31 (at scale)	2,186	219	\$690,069	1.30%	\$4,262,397	\$51,903

**Key implication:** RIDE projects on an annual basis by FY2030-31, commensurate with the new school proposal reaching full enrollment at-scale, total funding of \$4,262,397. \$690,069 of this \$4,262,397 will be contributed through local share funding. This \$690,069 represents 1.30% of Central Falls total reported FY19 expenditures.



## Excel Academy Rhode Island

### Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request

#### Local Community: Central Falls, North Providence, Providence

#### *Total Pupil Funding Projections, Commensurate with Expansion Proposal: North Providence*

Fiscal Year	Proposed Charter Projected Enrollment		Projected Total Local Share Pupil Funding commensurate with new charter proposal	Projected Total Local Share Per Pupil Funding as % of local FY19 Total Expenditures <sup>x</sup>	Projected Total Pupil Funding (Local+State+ Federal) commensurate with new charter proposal	Projected Total Withholding for Fixed or Unique Costs (to district)
	Total	North Providence				
2022-23 (Year 1)	166	17	\$118,524	0.19%	\$249,577	\$31,552
2026-27 (5 years)	1,510	151	\$1,052,772	1.71%	\$2,216,831	\$280,256
2030-31 (at scale)	2,186	219	\$1,526,868	2.48%	\$3,215,139	\$406,464

**Key implication:** RIDE projects on an annual basis by FY2030-31, commensurate with the new school proposal reaching full enrollment at-scale, total funding of \$3,215,139. \$1,526,868 of this \$3,215,139 will be contributed through local share funding. This \$1,526,868 represents 2.48% of North Providence's total reported FY19 expenditures.

#### *Total Pupil Funding Projections, Commensurate with Expansion Proposal: Providence*

Fiscal Year	Proposed Charter Projected Enrollment		Projected Total Local Share Pupil Funding commensurate with new charter proposal	Projected Total Local Share Per Pupil Funding as % of local FY19 Total Expenditures <sup>xi</sup>	Projected Total Pupil Funding (Local+State+ Federal) commensurate with new charter proposal	Projected Total Withholding for Fixed or Unique Costs (to district)
	Total	Providence				
2022-23 (Year 1)	166	133	\$565,250	0.13%	\$2,401,448	\$42,560
2026-27 (5 years)	1,510	1,208	\$5,134,000	1.17%	\$21,811,648	\$386,560
2030-31 (at scale)	2,186	1,749	\$7,433,250	1.70%	\$31,579,944	\$559,680

**Key implication:** RIDE projects on an annual basis by FY2030-31, commensurate with the new school proposal reaching full enrollment at-scale, total funding of \$31,579,944. \$7,433,250 of this \$31,579,944 will be contributed through local share funding. This \$7,433,250 represents 1.70% of Providence's total reported FY19 expenditures.



## **Excel Academy Rhode Island Local Impact Analysis for New Charter Request Local Community: Central Falls, North Providence, Providence**

<sup>i</sup> Enrollment Assumptions and Comparison based off 10/1/19 reported data publicly available through RIDE's FRED database.

<sup>ii</sup> Inclusive of independent and catholic schools as available through RIDE's FRED database.

<sup>iii</sup> Academic Outcome data is based off published assessment results for 2019 available through the public Rhode Island Assessment Data Portal. \*Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because the minimum reporting size requirement (10 students) is not met. \*\*Data is suppressed to ensure confidentiality because greater than 95% of students did not meet expectations.

<sup>iv</sup> Demand analysis is based on the most recent lottery data available through the RIDE Charter School Applicant Report. Reporting sizes of less than 10 are suppressed for student privacy.

<sup>v</sup> Assumes constant local per-pupil funding, net of a constant withholding for fixed or unique costs.

<sup>vi</sup> Assumes constant state per-pupil funding.

<sup>vii</sup> Federal funding assumed constant and based off district averages.

<sup>viii</sup> Withholding for fixed or unique costs is the greater of either: 1) 7% of the per-pupil local share funding; or, 2) the per-pupil value of the districts' fixed or unique costs district's statutorily defined expenditure categories minus the average expenses incurred by all public schools of choice for those same categories of expenses. For those districts whose greater reduction occurs under the calculation of (2), there shall be an additional reduction to payments to mayoral academies with teachers who do not participate in the state teacher's retirement system under chapter 8 of title 36 equal to the per-pupil value of teacher retirement costs attributable to unfunded liability as calculated by the state's actuary for the prior preceding fiscal year. Assumed constant in projections.

<sup>ix</sup> Total FY19 Central Falls Expenditures: \$53,083,735 (all expenditures based on most recent, audited UCOA data)

<sup>x</sup> Total FY19 North Providence Expenditures: \$61,554,948 (all expenditures based on most recent, audited UCOA data)

<sup>xi</sup> Total FY19 Providence Expenditures: \$438,019,645 (all expenditures based on most recent, audited UCOA data)